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## Self-determination and independence movements in Europe

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## SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN EUROPE

**Jeannine Plamondon**

### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally in Europe, the state has had ultimate authority. With the creation of the European Union, however, states have delegated some authority and binding decision-making power to supranational institutions. This shift in the power structure has not only led to the consolidation of control away from the state toward supranational institutions, but has also led to the arguably unintended devolution of control away from the state toward regional governments (Loughlin 141). The state's relinquishing of power to the European Union in many ways has served the interest of stateless nations<sup>1</sup> and independence seeking-groups. This paper will examine the role that the European Union has played for stateless nations and will show that the EU has granted these groups greater autonomy and representation. It will then go on to examine how the EU can better address the needs of stateless nations based on current trends and the desires of independence-seeking groups.

Most states in Europe are not nation states; states are often composed of two or more distinct nationalities,<sup>2</sup> yet in this organization of multiple nationalities within one governing unit, one nationality almost inevitably asserts itself upon the others and becomes the dominant culture of the country, relegating the others to minority status (Joan i Marí 112). Stateless nations see great promise in the European Union because the EU is in many aspects a supranational institution that combines many languages, cultures, and nations under one common governance-structure. Many of the EU member states are small countries, yet upon their accession to the Union, their voices and concerns become, at least in theory, equal with those of large member states such as France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Thus stateless nations within member states see membership in the European Union as a golden opportunity for increased representation and autonomy. If a nation as small as Malta, with but 400,000 citizens has the right to have its voice heard in the EU, then why not Catalonia, with 7 million citizens?

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONALISM

In this paper, I will examine stateless nations and their position in the European Union through the lens of governance theory, as traditional International Relations (IR) and comparative politics theories often fail to examine the effects that sub-state actors have on the European Union and vice versa. The governance approach instead “draws on both IR and comparative politics and considers the EU as neither a traditional international organization *nor* as a domestic ‘political system’, but rather as a new and emerging system of ‘governance without government’” (Pollack 36). Governance is defined as “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” with four basic characteristics: “interdependence between organizations, continuing interactions between network members, game-like interactions, and a significant amount of autonomy from the state” (Pollack 37 emphasis added).

Gary Marks is credited as being the founder of multi-level governance theory that deals specifically with the effects of the supranational institutions on sub-state actors as well as on the traditional state. Marks argues against intergovernmentalist theorists such as Moravcsik by positing that in the EU states are losing power to both the European Commission at the supranational level as well as to the local and regional governments within the states (Pollack 39). Marks claims “supranational and sub-national actors (a)re chipping away at the traditional dominance and control of national governments” (Pollack 39). The manner in which these sub-state actors chip away at state centred dominance will be examined below.

### THE CONCEPT OF REGIONALISM

In their quest for increased representation and independence, many stateless nations and regional actors in Europe promote the idea of regionalism or a ‘Europe of the Regions’. During the beginning stages of European integration, regionalism was interpreted as a federal European government with regions and sub-national governments taking over many of the functions of the traditional member states (Loughlin 150). In 1963 French federalist author Guy Héraud defined regions as “the ancient ethnic or submerged nations in Europe whose right to statehood had been denied by their inclusion in ‘artificial’ nations constructed around the domination of one powerful ethnic group” (Loughlin 1996, 150). Héraud also argued “Europe was a route by which these submerged nations could escape from the clutches of their oppressive nation-states by becoming part of a wider European federation” (Loughlin 150-1).

Regionalism and the concept of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ today is more widely accepted and not strictly an idea supported by separatist groups (for example, the German *Länder*, under German federalism, are powerful regions in the EU). This concept continues to serve the interests of stateless nations, however, because it is the means by which the European Union transfers power and autonomy to regional governments (and, as noted above, many stateless nations constitute a region and control local and regional governments within the larger member state) (Loughlin 154).

According to Michael Keating, the current organizational structure of Europe is conducive to national mobilizations because it is “complex and relatively disorganized. It does not have a single focus of authority and does not make universal claims to allegiance or identity. It can, therefore, be embraced by stateless nations and emerging regions as a more neutral forum than the state, and a place where questions of sovereignty and ultimate authority are necessarily ambiguous” (46).

## **SECTION I: CURRENT TRENDS IN DEVOLUTION**

### **1. *EU Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds***

The first and one of the most important ways that sub-national actors gain autonomy within the structure of the European Union is the use of structural funds (Pollack 39). As part of the EU cohesion policy, funds are granted to specific regions within the EU in order to help reduce economic disparities throughout the Union (Hooghe and Marks 78). In 1988 the manner in which these funds were distributed was reformed and the new regulations stipulated that the Commission must work in a partnership with regional authorities in addition to state authorities in order to ensure the effective implementation of funding (Hooghe and Marks 78). Structural funds thus give sub-national governments more autonomy as they are provided with a source of funding outside the national government and they are empowered to work directly with the supranational institution of the European Commission without the traditional intervention of the state. Hooghe and Marks argue that in Belgium and Spain (both countries with sizeable stateless nations, which are already quite organized and powerful) “cohesion policy feeds into pressures for regionalization and the ongoing conflict concerning the allocation of competencies across levels of government” (80). Although Hooghe and Marks acknowledge that structural funding has not had as significant effects for all countries as it has in countries where regionalism is already well defined such as Belgium and Spain, the new cohesion policy regulations have brought autonomy issues to light in other countries with stateless nations, such as France and the United Kingdom. As a result sub-national actors in these countries have increased their calls for participation at the regional, national and supranational levels (81).

### **2. *Institutional representation for regions***

Although initially European integration was the sole domain of central governments, there has been a gradual increase in the representation of stateless nations and regions institutionally within the structure of the EU. The creation of the European Parliament and its increase in power over the years has granted stateless nations more representation through the election of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from their regions. MEPs are then able to represent the interests of their stateless nations directly at the European level. Currently there are Members of the European Parliament representing such stateless and minority nations as Scotland, Wales, Flanders, Vallée d'Aoste, Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Andalusia, the Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, and the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia (Stateless Nations Intergroup par. 1).

Another major breakthrough for regional representation occurred with the creation of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 1994 (Loughlin 155). The CoR provides an official European forum for regional concerns (EU par. 1). Under the Treaty of Maastricht, the Council of Ministers and the Commission must consult with the CoR on all regional issues (Hooghe and Marks 78). Additionally, the CoR may issue advisory opinions on any subject seen as affecting regional interests, which as Loughlin points out, are almost all public policy issues in Europe (155). Considering that regional actors are often the ones implementing European-level policy decisions, the opinions and support of the CoR are of some consequence (EU par. 5). Loughlin also argues that the significance of the CoR is evident in the fact that rather high-profile politicians have been appointed to the committee



to represent their regional interests, such as the powerful Catalan President Jordi Pujol who will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper (155). In his inaugural address to the Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, stressed the principle of subsidiarity in the European Union and the integral role of the CoR in this process of bringing the democracy and decision-making as close to the people as possible (Loughlin 157). The CoR helps to bridge the gap between European decision-makers and sub-national authorities that are often responsible for implementing the decisions taken at the European level (Hooghe and Marks 75). Although stateless nations are not the only regions represented in the CoR, this body provides stateless nations with a forum for representation on the European level independent of the central state.

### **3. European-level Cooperation and Representation of the Regions**

Another way in which the European Union has granted increased representation to stateless nations is through cross-national regional cooperation (Loughlin 157). As part of a supranational organization, a stateless nation is no longer confined to the context of dialogue between itself and the central state, but instead can join with other stateless nations and regional groups in seeking increased representation by lobbying at the European level (Loughlin 157). The European Free Alliance for example is the political party representing stateless nations at the European Parliament and is composed of political parties from over thirty-two stateless nations across Europe (EFA par. 3). EFA has made important strides in the European Parliament with regards to the protection of minority languages and human rights violations of minority groups (EFA par. 4). In November 2006, for example, the European Parliament passed a resolution on a new framework strategy for multilingualism, which was drafted by EFA MEP Bernat Joan i Mari. This framework strategy, among other things, calls on the European Commission to guarantee the respect of linguistic rights of all citizens and encourage the availability of communication with the EU in minority as well as official EU languages (par. 21). In 2006, EFA held public hearings on the deportation of ethnic Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and the situation of the stateless people of Latvia, which constitute human rights violations of members of minority nations (Greens-EFA par. 1).

EFA MEPs along with members of the Stateless Nations Intergroup of the European Parliament also played an active role in the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) by lobbying for increased rights for stateless nations and national minorities in the draft European Constitution (EFA 64). The most radical demand of stateless nations was for an 'internal enlargement clause', which would "permit stateless nations to democratically secede from their respective host-states while remaining members of the European Union" (Landau and Vanhala 9). Stateless nations also pushed for minority rights protection provisions in the constitution, claiming that general human rights protection often does not incorporate issues that are specific to stateless nations and national minorities, such as collective cultural and linguistic rights (Landau and Vanhala 9). Although these provisions were not accepted in the draft Constitution, due to their conflicting nature with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states, according to Landau and Vanhala, the fact that stateless and minority nations were involved "in the drafting process itself signals a potentially new system structuring supranational-state-minority relations" (12).

Another example of European level cooperation is the Assembly of European Regions (AER). The AER is an organization that lobbies the European Commission for

regional interests and has as its goal “a grassroots Europe where the regions are recognized as pillars of democracy and key partners of the European project” (AER par. 1). The AER was instrumental in the creation of the CoR (Hooghe and Marks 87). By combining forces and working at the European level for common goals of increased autonomy and representation, stateless nations and regions are better able to achieve their policy goals than by working alone at the national level.

Stateless nations and other sub-national groups have also gained increased representation by lobbying formally and informally for their own interest at the European level, in addition to lobbying through institutional channels. Many stateless nations have offices in Brussels from which to lobby the European institutions, gather information, and network (Hooghe and Marks 82). According to Hooghe and Marks, those regions that are most “politically entrenched, most ethnically and politically distinct” are those that are most likely to have well organized lobbying offices in Brussels and thus receive the most EU attention and funding (83). The existence of regional offices in Brussels shows that European integration has enabled stateless nations to represent their distinct interests at the European level, without going through the traditional channels of the nation-state.

Even within the unitary framework of states, stateless nations have gained increased representation at the European level. In the United Kingdom delegation to Brussels, for example, Welsh and Scottish civil servants tend to hold appointments in areas of specific concern to their regions, such as fisheries policy and regional policy (Hooghe and Marks 77). From the above examples it is evident that stateless nations have gained much representation at the European level, which has led to a greater awareness of their concerns and policy decisions favourable to regional interests.

#### 4. The Idea of Europe in Sub-national Politics

As evidenced above, membership in the supranational institution of the European Union provides stateless nations with a new level of governance from which to receive funding, and at which to represent and lobby for their interests; however, membership in the European Union also grants stateless nations increased leverage with their respective central governments. In Spain for example, the Catalan party *Convergència i Unió* agreed to form part of a coalition with the Socialist party in exchange for a greater role in EU decision-making (Hooghe and Marks 77). According to Hooghe and Marks, the Socialist party “agreed to re-evaluate regional representation in all EU organs and to incorporate regional representatives in decision-making on regional competencies” in exchange for *Convergència i Unió*’s support (77).

In *Catalonia and the ‘Idea of Europe’*, Giordano and Roller note that Catalan political parties, nationalist and non-nationalist alike, have “Europeanized their discourse”, which demonstrates a shift not only towards regionalism in the EU, but also a shift towards Europeanization in the sub-national regions (99). In the past, Catalonia sought increased autonomy and independence by seeking the modernization and transformation of the Spanish state; now Catalonia sees the EU and a move towards a Europe of the regions as the most effective vehicle for achieving increased independence (Giordano and Roller 102). Jordi Pujol, the charismatic leader of *Convergència i Unió*, has posited the idea of Europe “in which member states coexist with sub-national authorities on an equal level” (Giordano and Roller 104). Pujol has also raised public support for Catalonia as a nation throughout Europe through his public and private visits abroad and his participation in international

organizations (such as the CoR) (104).

The Scottish National Party (SNP), the main independence-seeking party in Scotland, has also Europeanized its discourse over the last twenty years. In 1988 the SNP began the "Independence within Europe" campaign in order to combat criticism that Scotland would not be economically viable as an independent state and gain support for independence at the local level (SNP par. 5).

In many stateless nations public opinion in favour of the European Union is high because the people see Europe as a new level of governance that tends to be more sympathetic to their interests (SNP par. 6). Stateless nations also argue that if the central government is giving up sovereignty to European institutions, then stateless nations have the right and obligation to ensure that these decisions taken at the European level are not in conflict with their regional interests (SNP par. 6).

### **5. Institutional Norms, Conditionality and the Rights of Stateless Nations**

In *Ethnic Politics in Europe*, Judith Kelley studies European supranational institutions and how they affect the treatment of central governments towards stateless nations and national minorities (6). She finds that normative pressure and conditionality from international institutions, and the European Union in particular, was significant in improving the policy of the central government towards stateless nations (176). Although conditionality of acceptance to the EU for candidate states tended to be the most important factor in determining behaviour, Kelley also argues that normative pressure alone could determine compliance in the absence of other factors, such as domestic opposition and strong nationalist influence.

In order to demonstrate specific effects that norms and conditionality have had on state policy towards stateless and minority nations, Kelley provides case studies from Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, and Romania. In Latvia, for example, despite strong domestic opposition, persuasion along with conditionality of EU membership was instrumental in amending a strict language law that originally would have placed "difficult or impossible language burdens on Russian-speakers" (Kelley 81). The EU pressured Latvia over a period of four years (1995–1999) by issuing statements calling on Latvia to change the law in order to be in accordance with international standards, engaging in correspondence with Latvian officials, and making statements about Latvia's failure to comply in the international press (Kelley 81). Finally the EU "made the link to EU admission clear" by stating that "Latvia's chance of opening negotiations was good – pending passage of a favourable language law" (Kelley 83). In December of 1999, despite fierce domestic opposition, the Latvian government approved an amended version of the law that was acceptable to the EU and which revoked many of the language requirements intended to discriminate against ethnic Russians (Kelley 83).

In another Latvian example, normative pressure from the EU combined with the conditionality of beginning accession talks was again crucial in amending legislation that was discriminatory towards members of minority nations (Kelley 84). The Latvian Citizenship Law denied citizenship to those who had arrived in Latvia after 1940 and involved strict requirements for those wishing to become Latvian citizens: knowledge of the Latvian language, knowledge of Latvian laws and legal structures, sixteen years residence in Latvia, an oath of allegiance, and the renunciation of citizenship of another state (Kelley 84). This law also stipulated an annual quota for the number of people to be granted citizenship

and refused citizenship to children born in Latvia to non-citizen parents (Kelley 90). The EU issued many statements to the Latvian government that included specific changes it wished to see in the law and eventually stated that “reform of the citizenship law was a ‘key criterion’ for beginning EU entry talks” (Kelley 91). As a result, the Latvian parliament instituted the changes required by the EU by abolishing the annual citizenship quotas and giving citizenship to “stateless children” (Kelley 91).

As the European Union expands eastward, it incorporates an increasing number of stateless nations within new member states. For EU candidate countries the possibility of EU membership is enticement enough to persuade them into granting increased representation and autonomy to stateless nations within their borders. Although Kelley maintains that normative pressure can be significant (in the absence of domestic opposition), she does not provide any such examples of normative pressure without associated conditionality in her case studies, which makes the concept of normative pressure difficult to apply to current member states without further research.

### **5. European Union Involvement in Self-determination Issues**

In recent months, the European Parliament has addressed issues of self-determination within current member states. In October 2006, the European Parliament addressed the peace talks in Spain between the Spanish government and the Basque political party Batasuna. After a controversial debate, a majority in Parliament came out in support of the peace initiative undertaken by the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (EP par. 21). Another sovereignty issue recently discussed in a conference at the Parliament was the reunification of Ireland and the potential benefits and difficulties involved in this process, drawing from the German example (EP par. 6). Although currently the European Parliament and other European institutions have no right to formulate binding policy decisions in this area, the fact that such issues are being debated in the European arena, rather than being dismissed as an internal affair, indicates that increasingly the EU can and will have an impact on questions of self-determination.

## **SECTION II: THE EUROPEAN UNION’S FUTURE ROLE**

From the above evidence, it is clear that the European Union is currently playing an important role in the increased representation and autonomy of stateless nations, both for those belonging to the EU and those desiring to join. Hooghe, Marks, Loughlin, and Keating all argue that this trend towards devolution will continue and although regionalism will never (and in the interests of stateless nations should never) become uniform across European regions, the questions remain as to what progress for autonomy-seeking nations is desirable. Many of Europe’s stateless nations and governance scholars are predicting and calling for reform within the EU institutions to grant these groups more equality and representation in Europe. Landau and Vanhala state that the demands of stateless nations can be divided into two categories, with recognition, access, and participation comprising *constitution-affirming demands* while separation, autonomy, and independence comprise *constitution-challenging demands* (4). They go on to argue that stateless and minority nations will often begin with constitution-affirming demands, but will change from constitution-affirming to constitution-challenging demands if the former are not adequately met (Landau and Vanhala 5). Additionally, with the increasing acceptance of Eastern European countries, many of whom have sizeable stateless nation populations within their borders

(such as the Roma in Romania, the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, etc.) and a poor track record for minority rights and recognition, it is evident that increasingly the European institutions will have to deal with minority issues. The following section of this paper will address some possible reforms.

### **1. A More Representative Official Languages Policy**

One issue that is a major source of contention among stateless nations within the European Union is the official EU languages policy. Under the current policy, each state can choose which languages it wishes to be official EU languages (generally the official language(s) of the state). Here as in other instances is exposed the unrepresentative nature of the state-centred EU; citizens of small states such as Malta with just 400,000 people are able to interact with the European institutions in their native language of Maltese, yet Catalonians, with 7 million speakers must speak Castilian Spanish or another language not their native tongue at the European institutions. This policy is inefficient at best, as the costs for recruiting and training translators for some of the less widely spoken languages are exorbitant, and at worst is unrepresentative of the linguistic diversity and heritage of many Europeans.

As mentioned above, the European Parliament adopted a framework strategy for multilingualism drafted by EFA MEP Bernat Joan i Mari. Although the strategy was adopted, many of Joan i Mari's main points regarding minority languages were diluted or deleted completely. A possible reason for this is that the report demanded more funding and programs for translation and learning of all minority languages. With approximately sixty non-official indigenous languages in the EU area, increased funding for all minority languages becomes an expensive and impossible task. By advocating increased funding and programmes for widely spoken non-official languages, however, Joan i Mari would have seen more of his regional and minority language policy recommendations passed, and would bring increased publicity to the lack of representation of stateless nations at the EU.

Spain has made some efforts to democratize its languages at the European institutions by paying interpretation costs for minority language speakers of Catalan, Basque, and Galician upon request (EP par. 3). There still remains much to be done in this area, however, as in the everyday functioning of the EU, even Catalan MEPs and Commissioners are not able to function in their native tongue, as do so many of their counterparts. It is also important to note that Spain is the most progressive state in the EU with regards to minority languages policy. Other stateless nations lack the few opportunities to use their native tongue at the EU institutions that has been granted to minority language speakers in Spain.

In the European Parliament Rules of Procedure, it states that all members have the right to follow debates and express themselves in their native languages (EP par. 1). Although it is evident that providing interpretation into every EU language (official or non-official) would be impossible in terms of both logistics and cost, the European Parliament should be accessible to native speakers of widely used minority languages. An example of how this could be done would be to examine the number of MEPs with a minority language as their native tongue as well as the number of constituents overall in the European Union with the same native language. When in these circumstances, minority languages are equally or more widely-used than the ten most commonly used official languages in the EU, then provisions should be made by the EU for the interpretation of these languages upon request of participating MEPs. Although interpretation is costly, all in the European Parliament affirm



that multilingualism is an essential aspect of the European institutions, and currently interpretation costs constitute just 1% of the EU budget (EU par. 3). By reforming interpretation procedures in other areas, such as reducing stand-by orders for interpreters, which leads to paying for services supplied but not used, the European Parliament will have increased interpretation funds available to support the use of regional and minority languages in the EU (EU par. 5).

## ***2. An Increased Role for the Committee of the Regions***

In order to ensure proper representation of stateless nations and regions, there have also been calls to increase the power of the Committee of the Regions. The CoR, as discussed above, is more representative of the people and nations of Europe, as representatives from different regions are assigned based upon the population of each state (CoR par. 4). Despite the more representative nature of the CoR, its power is largely symbolic and it plays a strictly consultative role (Hooghe and Marks 78). Some stateless nations and their representatives, such as EFA, have proposed that the European Parliament be transformed into a bi-cameral legislature, in which the citizens are represented in one chamber and the nations (including stateless and minority nations) and the regions represented in the other (EFA par. 5). In a CoR report written for the European Commission, Catalan President Jordi Pujol called for the CoR to have the status of a European Institution, like the Parliament, Commission, Council, and European Court of Justice, which would give it more than simply consultative powers on issues of regional concern (Loughlin 156). These changes would increase the autonomy and representation of stateless nations within the European institutions.

## ***3. Judicial Representation for Stateless Nations***

A final call for increasing the representation of stateless nations is the inclusion of minority rights in European Human Rights policy. This includes granting territorial entities (i.e. stateless nations) within Europe the right to access the European Court of Justice (ECJ), which currently settles legal disputes between EU member states, EU institutions, businesses, and individuals, but not regional or sub-national governments (ECJ par. 5). In the same report mentioned above, Pujol recommended that the CoR have “the right to bring infringements of the principle of subsidiarity to the European Court of Justice” (Loughlin 156). Allowing stateless nations or regional governments to bring such cases before the ECJ would ensure greater protection of the rights of these regions under European law and would ensure increased compliance of member states to principles of subsidiarity.

Keating suggests that the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) also has a more important role to play in the promotion of self-determination. He states “a European-wide rights regime is emerging that, for the first time, effectively separates rights from national citizenship” (86). As Keating states, the EU is more than a common market, and the European Court of Human Rights shows that Europe is prepared to embrace common values (86). Many states within the European Union have members of stateless nations within their borders who are denied citizenship and whose language rights and voting rights among others are repressed. This is evidenced in the above example of Latvia (which, although has made some progress, still has far to go in terms of equal treatment of minority nations) (Kelley 87). Another example is that of the ‘erased people’ of Slovenia who are migrants from other former Yugoslav republics who were living in Slovenia but had not

obtained Slovenian citizenship at the time of independence. The names of these people were effectively erased off of the public registry (Amnesty International par. 5). Increased use of the European Court of Human Rights for complaints against such violations would ensure greater protection of the human rights of stateless and minority nations as individuals and as a group. In discussing the inclusion of minority rights in the draft European Constitution, Hungarian Foreign Minister Lazlo Kovacs said, "If... the protection of minority rights will not be included in the EU constitution... it would indicate that something has changed, that these [constitutional] documents are no longer valid, or that they are not equally valid for everyone" (Landau and Vanhala 11). The same principle can be applied to minority rights at the ECHR, if the ECHR does not address minority rights, then it is no longer valid as an institution upholding the human rights of all Europeans.

## CONCLUSION

The European Union is a unique institution that consolidates power to the supranational level on the one hand and devolves power towards sub-national governments and regions on the other. This shift in the traditional power structure away from the central state is a great benefit to stateless nations in Europe who gain increased representation by acting at the European level and also gain increased autonomy by looking outside the central state to receive funding and decision-making powers from the European institutions. One issue relevant to this paper that could be examined further is the specific normative role that the European Union does and can play in issues of sub-national autonomy, and particularly how the effects of normative pressure or even the use of normative pressure change over time. The devolution of power to sub-state actors is not uniform, but it is arguably permanent and will continue to progress as European integration goes wider and deeper. It is already clear that the European Union is playing an increased role in determining the fate of stateless nations within and without its member states. This process leads to the necessity for increased representation of stateless nations in the European institutions. Although many of these changes in Europe were not foreseen when integration first began, they are beneficial not only to stateless nations and minorities, but to Europe in general as it builds a more representative society – a 'Europe of the Regions' and a 'Europe of the Peoples'.

## END NOTES

1. According to the Stateless Nations Intergroup of the European Parliament, stateless nations are "internal nations of 'union states', that is states constituted by historical unions of previously independent and self-governing parts. Most such internal nations, or 'stateless nations' aspire to, and many have achieved the status of constitutionally self-governing countries within their respective member states . . . Nevertheless, in the perspective of the state's constitution, the powers of these internal nations are legally subordinate powers" (par. 3). Some prominent examples include Catalonia and the Basque Country in Spain, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom, etc. For the purposes of this paper, this definition also includes national minorities, which are "minority groups living outside the state with which they identify historically, culturally or linguistically" such as ethnic Russians in the Baltic States, the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, etc. (Landau and Vanhala 2).

2. For the purposes of this paper I am not referring to diverse immigrant communities, but rather to established communities of nationalities indigenous to Europe, as defined above.



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